



NEW BEDFORD FISHING HERITAGE CENTER

Date of Interview: January 17, 2017

Hart, Kevin ~ Oral History Interview

Madeleine Hall-Arber

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Kevin Hart interview, January 17, 2017

Background

Name of person interviewed: Kevin Hart [KH]

Facts about this person:

Age About 54; says he's same age as his 1962 water boat
 Sex Male
 Occupation Water boat operator delivering water to fishing boats
 Residence (Town where lives) Dartmouth
 Ethnic background (if known)

Interviewer: Madeleine Hall-Arber [MHA]

Transcriber: Millie Rahn [MR]

Interview location: Fairhaven

Date of interview: January 17, 2017

Key Words

Ice house, bottled drinking water, fishing fleet, Smithwick Mariners insurance, Carlos, Roy, Warren, Fleet Fisheries, Cape May, [George?], scallopers, Mexicans, New Bedford Voc, quota, Atlantic sea scallop, regulations, Loran numbers, superstitions, Bob [Thornwell?], Westport, Dartmouth, Kelly's Fairhaven Shipyard, Danny [Erlichson?], drug tests, Legacy, [Maru?], grub girls, schooners, lobster pots, wooden traps, corner buoy, thumb, ghost traps, gauge size, egggers, v-notchers, by-catch, quota, shackles, Bay Fuels, groundfish, Banks, Tier 3, bump motor

Abstract

Kevin Hart is a former lobsterman who now runs the only water boat delivering water to fishing boats in New Bedford and Fairhaven. He grew up in Westport, where his father was part-owner of a lobster boat; he now lives in Dartmouth. He talks about being the only water boat provider, the decline of the industry and its current status in New Bedford, even with current prosperity of scalloping, as well as voicing future ideas for New Bedford with and without the industry. He discusses the "trickle down" economy to all the shore-side businesses and also talks about superstitions, his days lobstering and how they changed over time. Talks a lot about current politics, in both fishing regulations and in general.

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[00:00] Introduction. In Fairhaven, supplies water to fishing boats. Did offshore lobstering for 25 years, then bought his water boat that's been in New Bedford harbor since 1962; water supply boat before that was wooden.

[05:04] Father is an ex-lobsterman; now sells insurance to boats. Kevin did lobstering for more than 20 years and talks about then taking over water supply boat, which he prefers to being a captain on a lobster boat.

[9:50] Talks about decline of the industry, possible fish imports from China, and discusses scalloping and other regulations.

[15:18] Talks about early days fishing. Compares money as fisherman with teachers then and now. Describes fishing as "a young man's game" and compares changes then and now.

[20:01] Talks about his son, whom he discouraged from going into fishing, who's got a well-paid union job doing HVAC work, and his daughter going to nursing school.

[25:00] Talks about equipment and clothing for his job; changes in technology.

[30:16] Superstitions of fishermen. Family from Westport. Explains getting water from ice house and how job has changed since he started; 50 boats are gone since he started water deliveries in 2002/2003.

[35:06] Talks about who's going to take over industry; inshore versus of lobstering; women on waterfront and woman who's a captain on the Legacy.

[40:02] More on women in shore-side industry jobs. More on what's going on with the waterfront these days. "The only thing the water guy gets is rumors."

[45:02] Thoughts on best years in the industry. Talks of lobstering in his time and in Maine now. Ghost traps on bottom of ocean and lobster regulations.

[50:03] Talks of by-catch, and politics of "saving whales" and organizations saving whales starting in 1990s.

[55:13] Discusses issues with fisheries research, tensions between fishermen and researchers, who should be working together, but says regulators "only care about whales and making rules for the sake of rules."

[1:00:07] Lists all the related jobs that support the fishing boats, and talks about the trickle-down effect throughout the industry.

[1:05:01] Thoughts on the future of the industry. Talks about larger political implications and long discussion of his thoughts on current political situation generally.

[1:10:06] Continues discussion of political situation.

[1:15:13] Further discussion of political situation.

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[1:20:04] Describes the water boat itself and thoughts on the future of the New Bedford waterfront.

[1:25:08] More on politics of New Bedford waterfront and things generally.

[1:29:42] End of Audio

[00:00]

MHA: This is an interview for the New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center funded by the Archie Green Fellowship from the Library of Congress. As part of this project we are interviewing shore-side people in the New Bedford/Fairhaven fishing industry to record their stories, document their skills and knowledge, and better understand their important role in the fishing industry. The recording and transcript will become part of the permanent collection at the Library of Congress. I am Madeleine Hall-Arber and today I'm speaking with Kevin Hart from Fairhaven, or in Fairhaven, rather. Today is January 17, 2017 and the time is about 11:30. Thank you so much for agreeing to do this. Maybe you can just start by telling us what you do. Introduce yourself first.

KH: Aren't you going to ask me a bunch of, you want me to give you a story now?

MHA: Well -- [laughs]

KH: I'm not a storyteller or a speech giver. I thought I was going to answer a few questions. I deliver water to the fishing boats. I fill their water tanks. I fill my boat at the ice house and I go around and fill their tanks and they mostly use that water for showering and washing. Everybody uses bottled water nowadays to drink it.

MHA: I see.

KH: That's basically it. There's not really a lot to it. That's why I do it, because it's pretty simple. It's just me. There's not enough for employees. The fishing fleet is just, shrinks every year. You know? I'm just hoping right now there's a fishing fleet long enough for me to make it to the end of the line.

MHA: Are you filling both scallop boats and draggers?

KH: Yes. And there ain't too many draggers left.

MHA: I know.

KH: There's not too many draggers left and they've cut the scallopers back. They only get five or six trips a year.

MHA: Right.

KH: It gets pretty lean for us shore-side guys because trickle down is true. If they're out there making money, it trickles down to all the rest of us. If they ain't making no money, then there's no trickling down.

MHA: Right.

KH: That's the way it is, you know?

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KH: It's an okay little racket. I mean, we make, you know it's a nice little spot here. I'm in the harbor. I don't have to, I used to fish offshore myself for 25 years.

MHA: Oh really?

KH: Back before I switched to this. I bought, that boat's been in the harbor. That boat's, 1962, it's as old as me. There was another wooden one before that, I'm told, that used to go around, but there was a time when our boat would be going seven days a week; it still couldn't keep up, there were so many boats here.

MHA: Really?

KH: Now, it's a part-time job at best, except for you got to be here. You got to put in part time every day. It's not like you can say I'll work three days this week and take the next four off. You got to put in some hours every day because you never know when these guys are going to be here or when they're going to call you or what the circumstance is going to be. But, it is what it is.

MHA: How did you get into it? What made you decide to switch from offshore?

KH: Well, fishing was going to crap and I was sick of it.

MHA: Were you ground fishing?

KH: No, I was actually offshore lobster and I've done that for, I don't know, since 1979 or something like that. Because I own my own boat. I did it for 20 years. Finally, I just couldn't take babysitting crew members every, and the grief. We were getting the same price for our product 20 years later from when I started, basically, a little bit more. Maybe went up a dollar. Well, everything else went up a lot, so I saw the writing on the wall. There's no, it wasn't going to get better till I'm dead. And it hasn't. You know, some guys do okay in certain spots, but the bulk of the guys, it's a real tough living, so I sold out and the guy who had this kind of, he was letting it go and he decided to go do something else, so I figured I'd give it a try and [sighs] been doing it for 12 years now. I can't complain. Don't get me wrong. My wife still has to work. We don't have a Cadillac parked in the yard, that's for sure, but you can make a small living out of it. It beats going out fishing. That's basically why I did it. And this is all I've ever known is the fishing industry anyway, so it wasn't too much else I was going to do.

MHA: Was your family in the fishing business?

KH: Well, yeah. Actually, my father, he actually, he was a partner on the lobster boat when we first got it, but he sells insurance to all these boats.

[5:04] KH: [continued] He's part of Smithwick Mariners Insurance Company, so they watched it all shrink right up too. Everybody has. It was on the, there's nowhere near as many welders or anything anymore. I'm just kind of lucky there's just one water boat so it fills that little niche, make it convenient for them, because they can get it at the ice house if they want, so I'm not the

only show in town. It's like perpetual fill-up. They come in, I fill their tank, and they don't even know. I leave a tag in the door. Sometimes I don't see these guys for months. Every once in a while, I run in, [mimics], hey, how you doing? And that's about it. Other than that, they come in, they go off. I fill them up. The fuel guy fills them up, they come back down, and off they go fishing.

MHA: How do they contact you to let you know that they're about to go fishing and want water?

KH: They don't. When they come in --

MHA: Oh, I see.

KH: I automatically fill them. I keep track of every boat in the harbor, so I know when they come in. I say "oh, So and So's in." Plus, I work the fuel guys. See? There's three fuel guys and they all know when their boats come in, so if I've got a question, I can always just call them, but most of the time I know. I'll leave here today. When I come down tomorrow, I'll know which boats have just come in and I'll just fill them. Then in a few days they'll go fishing. Because they don't really use the water when they're at the dock. Or if they do, then they'll call me. I mean, sometimes they call, but for the most part it's all perpetual fill-up. Some of these guys say you're like a ghost. I never see you. That's just the way it is, but it's convenient for them and they don't have to waste time, because sometimes it takes a while to fill them up. They use a lot of water. So, they don't have to deal with it at the ice house and some of them actually have their ice delivered by the truck, so that's basically why I'm still in business, probably, because it makes it convenient for them. Don't get me wrong. You couldn't go build one of those water boats, build that boat and replace it, and come down here and survive. There'd be no way. You got to have a low overhead. I live, you know I don't live high off the hog too much. That's just the way it is.

MHA: And you already knew people from being in the business?

KH: Yup. Oh, right. Yeah, I knew everyone plus it was the only water boat that was here and the other guy actually had let it kind of go. He was going through a messy divorce so he kind of stopped filling guys and everything and they actually got a taste of what it was like not to have the water boat. So, I think when I took over and came back they were kind of like oh, we like the water boat, having it, because you don't miss something till it's gone.

MHA: So, what do you have to do? Where is the, where on most boats is the --

KH: It's up on the bow on most of them.

MHA: Oh, okay.

KH: You can, it's kind of hard to see. There's usually a pipe sticking up on the hooks, a vent, and then there's a fill use on the bow on most of them. Some of them are in the stern, but 95 percent of them are up on the bow, so you just pull up, climb up there. Pull my, I throw a rope up, pull my hose up, make sure you put it in the right hole. That's it. It's mindless work. I say

that but it's not, because you got to keep track of all the boats and everything, so you keep that in your head. I don't write them down, I just know. But it isn't brain surgery.

MHA: When you first started, did the guy train you at all? Or you just figured it out? [laughs]

KH: Not really. A little, but he just told me what boats he had and if I didn't know where the fill was, I'd ask him where the fill was, but I'd see the guys. I'm pretty well self, I'm pretty self-taught myself my whole life, so I'm way over-qualified to do that job. I was the captain of the offshore lobster boat. I could run one of these other boats if I wanted to. I don't want to live out there. I did that. That's camping out on the ocean. I did that for 20 years. Missed all kinds of birthdays, anniversaries, you name it, I missed it. I just got tired of it so I sold out and my kids, I still had some kids left, you know? I think my youngest might have been, she might have been 14 years old when I sold out, or 12 anyways. So, I got a little time left of them as kids; they ain't kids no more.

MHA: Are any of them in the fishing business?

KH: Absolutely not.

MHA: Was that your preference to steer them away?

[9:50] KH: Absolutely. Because there's no future here. If they want to take this all away from these guys. The do-gooders. They don't want them in the ocean. That's the bottom-line. Look, wait till they make these marine monuments out there and kick them all out. They don't care about. They could care less if New Bedford, if there wasn't a boat here. It wouldn't affect them, it doesn't affect them in the least. In the least. They've still got their millions and they live up on, it's doesn't matter. They don't care. Look what they've done to the woodcutters out on the West Coast. You go into the Carolinas and some of those places, towns wiped right out. Now, in Appalachia, all the coal mines. They don't care. They don't care. They could care less if these --. What they'd like is, they really try for, is get a corporation to own each, and then they can control that corporation better. There's only, you go over there the other side, I bet you there ain't eight draggers that are owned by one guy. There might be a couple that own two. Other than that, Carlos owns the rest of them. And if they take them all away from him, then that's it. I don't know where they plan to get the fish from. No, I shouldn't say that. I do know where they plan to get the fish from. They want to import it from places like China. Tilapia and crap like that, grown in their own piss, is basically what it comes down to. Excuse my, but that's --

MHA: I'd never buy tilapia. [laughs]

KH: Neither would I, but that's what they want. You could see them pushing it and slowly but surely, look how, come on, you're not a young, look at, you've see change in your life.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: Has it been good?

MHA: I started going, as a grad student, started going out on the day boats out of Provincetown and that's how I learned about the industry.

KH: Yeah?

MHA: I have seen some change; you're right.

KH: And it's in everything.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: It's in life. Everywhere. It's not just in the fishing. It's everywhere. The change hasn't been for the good.

MHA: We worry about our kids, yeah.

KH: Oh, I tell people my grand-daughter will be lucky to live to 50 years old in this world the way it's going. If they keep, just oblivious to everything, just let it all keep going, we're in a world of trouble. We're already in a world of trouble. And a hundred million people don't work. You've got now, they think it's okay to shoot the police. The police think it's okay to shoot the unarmed people. You know? I mean, there is, it's deep. I mean, we're isolated right down here, actually. It's not bad. We live in a pretty good area. There's not bars on the windows or anything like that. Yet. But I got to tell you, you go right over there to the city and go to any intersection now, there's people standing out there with a sign. Homeless. Looking for -- . Five years ago there wasn't anybody on any of these corners, anywhere. Now they're on every single one. OK? It's not, it's not good. It's not good. It's too bad.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: But they tried to wipe the scallopers out when they first hit them with, they said okay, they can only have seven crew members. And they never thought seven guys would go out there and cut 50,000 pounds of scallops and that just totally, totally, so now they had to start taking trips away. So, they took trips away and what was the next thing? Now the price went up, so they still couldn't get them out of business, even though they tried by just cutting them everywhere they could. Their game was that if they cut them enough they'll crush all the little one-, two-boat guys and get them out of it and they'll get swallowed up by the big companies and then you might have three big companies. And then you watch. When it gets down to three or four big companies that own them all, it'll be no more sharing up. It'll be salary. You'll get so much an hour or whatever, and that's the way it'll be.

MHA: How many single boats or owner-operators, which maybe own two boats with a partner, how many of those are left to scalloping? I know that hardly anybody in the ground fishing --

KH: There's a few. There's like one family owns four boats and there's a couple, there's a handful at the most that own one or two and that's it. It's just a handful. Even with the scallopers. That's right here in this port. Like you got this guy here. He's the Vantages two that color and

then there's these three other, their little group. They're kind of color-coded, but most of them pretty much, there's hardly any that own just one. There's only a couple of those and then there's a few that own two, and then there's others that are partners in three or four, and then of course there's the big ones like Roy and Warren and Fleet Fisheries that own a lot of them. Then you got the guys down South, that new operation just bought up all the blue ones there, Blue Harvest or whatever it is. He had bought all the ones out of Cape May, so they got quite a few.

MHA: Ha. I didn't realize that. Yeah.

[15:18] KH: Yeah, George's. They sold all theirs, which I don't blame them. The thing I think is these guys, now they came in and I heard it was, I don't know, 50 million dollars or whatever it was they paid for the seven boats or whatever. It was a pile of money, six, seven million dollars a boat. What happens if scalloping goes to crap next year? All right? I think they've overpaid, you know? If it holds up, well, maybe, but I think they've overpaid and they're taking a hell of a gamble. Because it also, it's not just scallopers. The swipe of a pen does it too. Like I said, they're sitting up there on the hill and they say hey, it's too many days for them. We got to look like we're doing something. Cut them back some more.

MHA: How did you get started with fishing originally for the offshore lobstering?

KH: You came out of my driveway and if you went left, you went down to the Point. If you went right you went up to the school. After I got done with school, I went down to the Point. Then, the money was decent and stuff. Now, when I started fishing, I probably made just as an average guy on deck three times what a school teacher makes. Back then, that was good money. You were making three times what a school teacher makes. Whatever they made, 10 grand. You know what I mean? It wasn't, but the problem was, we only went up a little. Now a school teacher makes way more than what, makes a lot, and it just, you know what I'm saying? We never, it always stayed the same. We made good money but it never climbed up enough. It should have doubled or tripled. Well, that never happened. It only went up a little percentage. But back then, it was money. I liked the work. I didn't mind working. And you could catch something and it was a different, lobstering was kind of different. It was quick trips in and out. We didn't have to go as far. Well, after a while, all that got all sucked up and all the gravy came off the top. Now I had to be out there six, seven days and all over the ocean and just got tired of it. Someone came along and offered to buy it. I said you know what? You're not going to, the first offer is usually the best offer and there ain't too many of them. I'd had it for sale for a while. So, I figured I better take it and I don't really miss it, other than being young. Right?

MHA: I can identify with that. [laughs]

KH: Right, right. That's what I miss and everybody asks. I said I miss about being young. I says I could work all day and night. I never thought of, you had your whole life in front of you. It was different, you know what I mean? Now, my life is pretty well set. I know there ain't going to be much change for me the rest of the way down the road. Back then, you know, it was exciting, so I didn't mind the fishing and stuff. Now, plus, it's a young man's game.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: You got to be young to go do that gig.

MHA: I would think even with filling the tanks in the winter would be tough.

KH: Yes, it's cold. Cold stinks, you know? And the older you get, the more the cold stinks, but it's no way near as hard. All's I got to do, it's just no way near as hard as fishing and the job I used to do, so it still seems easy to me.

MHA: I see.

KH: So it's, big deal. So, you got to get out in the cold. Suck it up. Get out in the cold and do it. It'll be done when you're done being in the cold, you can go someplace where it's warm. But you know? It's work. It's not a happy fun time. It's not convenient. And the sooner people realize that it's work, the better off they'll be. It's as simple as that, but we got whole generations now that they don't want to work. I mean, I watched it. I never saw, when I started, I never thought I'd see how you just lost crew members. By the time, when I first was working, those guys, everybody on my boat had a truck. It was a list this long of people with their names and numbers that wanted one of those jobs, but my guys wouldn't give it up. Slowly and surely those guys got older and the younger generations. When I left, when I quit, nobody had a, nobody even had a driver's license. Had to go around and pick them all up because they're such a bunch of misfits, okay? And that's the way it is. There's crew member, then they're either a deadbeat dad or they haven't paid their taxes, so soon as you start paying them, if you're paying them for a while, next thing you know, those places are after you. This is what all these guys have to deal with. Those places. And if you don't pay, then they're going to hold you liable for the money.

[20:01] KH: [continued] So, as soon as you tell the guy, hey, the childcare's after you there for back child support, [laughs]. Well, guess what? They quit.

MHA: Really?

KH: Right then and there. They quit. Sure, and then they go off to the next boat and then it could be a year or two before they get caught up to there. That's how they do it. You know? And that's all crap. I just got sick of dealing with it. Sick of it.

MHA: Is that true also on the scallop boats?

KH: Somewhat. Somewhat, I'd say, but most of these guys on these scallopers now, they're all Mexicans.

MHA: Huh.

KH: There ain't too many Americans left here. I mean, other than the captain and the mate, and even, but a lot of the workers are Mexicans. There's not too many, well, not too many young guys. There's a few here and there on a couple of boats, but it changed. You know? People, there used to be a course at New Bedford Voc on offshore fishing. There's no such, you know what I

mean? It's changed. There's nobody promoting going into it. I wouldn't promote it either. I know guys who own these things and they won't let their kids go on them. Own them and right now they've been making a lot of money. These guys are rich now. They've been making a lot of money for the last 10, 12 years. A lot. And they're still no, because they know.

MHA: It's a gamble.

KH: It can change just like that. Just like that. You know? And that'll always be there for them. You go to go out and try something else. I mean, I told my kid, I said I can get you a job fishing anytime you want, I said, but I ain't going to. You know what? He went to New Bedford Voc, got an HVAC and next thing you know he's got a union job with Johnson Controls. That kids make 50 bucks an hour now. Drives from one area to the next and then next thing the rates go up because I'm over here and after eight hours I'm time and a half. I'm looking at him like you've got to be kidding me. You know? There's a little work out there, but not [unintelligible]. People need to go and learn how to do things now. They all start. Last 30 years they brainwashed everybody that the only way you're going to make a living is go to college. And now look. We got more nitwits in college coming out and there's nothing for them to do. They're going in there taking courses in tiddlywinks and everything else, and it's free. You know? They're just going in and my son went for a year and a half and then he said, I can't do it anymore. He couldn't even get in the classes he wanted to get in. Oh, they're full. The seniors got them, you got to wait, so go take a filler. And I'm saying wait a sec. At 10,000 dollars a year they're telling you to go take filler classes? This is craziness. And they wanted him to take a Bible class. I says well you go down there and you tell them you can go to church and learn the Bible and they'll teach you how to sing for free on Sundays, I says, because this is insane. And finally, he said that's it. I'm done. And he went to work. Just couldn't take the -- . It took my daughter, and she's a worker, took her five years to get through nursing school because they stroke them along so bad.

MHA: Huh.

KH: Think about it. They get a whole extra year's pay and like my daughter worked her way and paid for it all, but most of it is a government check that the college gets from the government. Because they walk into college. What do you need? You need a student loan. What does the college do? They don't question anything. You can get this loan, you can get that loan, you can get this loan, and the check comes. It doesn't go through you. It comes right from the government to the college, so you think there's any initiative there or incentive to lower the rates? None whatsoever. So, student loans have made college, unaffordable. . .priced it out of the world.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: Okay? If you made it so they really had to work to get that loan, the colleges would have to compete to get, to keep their prices down, so people would go. There's no competing now if they're going to get whatever. You go in there, whatever you want, they're oh, yeah, you can get this loan, a Pell, this and that. Oh, if you're lucky, you get a couple of grants, but if not, we'll give you the loan. So they go and they take whatever. Doesn't matter. They ain't paying for it. They are eventually, but in their heads --

MHA: I was just going to say -- . [laughs]

KH: But they're not. In their head, they're not. They're not in their head. They're just taking a loan. They haven't even fathomed that when they get to the end of this, it could be \$80,000 worth of debt that they've never made a payment. They've never even had a job, some of these people, never mind made a payment. All of a sudden, they're going to get to the end and be like, oh, yeah, well, you know? That's why I told my kids, my daughter, she actually, I paid for her first year and then she paid for the rest. She says I do better, if I know I'm paying for it myself.

[25:00] MHA: Interesting.

KH: But yeah, that's why I kept them out. I didn't want them in the fishing. She's a nurse, but no, the fishing industry is pretty slow.

MHA: Is there any special equipment you need for your job?

KH: Nope. Just some diesel fuel, a couple, that's the whole, it's very simple. Just a pump motor and a diesel motor and a little boat, my hose, and that's the whole idea. The low overhead, the low cost, low insurance, just me. Keep it small, keep it all. If it had all kinds of overhead, I couldn't do it.

MHA: How about your clothing? Is that the kind of thing that you typically wear?

KH: Well, it's wintertime. It was a little chilly this morning.

MHA: That's what I mean. [laughs]

KH: Yeah. In summertime I have shorts on. I might wear a float coat. When it gets real cold in the winter, I have a flotation jacket, but --

MHA: Actually, I'm glad you mentioned that because that is something I was interested in, is whether people in general.

KH: They're very hot, that foam coat. So, it's got to be cold out or else you end up you're just sweating all the time. No, I've been on the water all my life. I told my wife every once in a while, I'll put it on so they can find the body.

MHA: Oh.

KH: So, when I float up, but, no, I don't wear it too much.

MHA: What do you consider the hardest part of your job?

KH: It's easy. [laughs] You know, to me it's not that hard. Hardest part is I got to do it every day. All right? To be honest? It'd be great if I was independently wealthy and had a money tree

in the backyard and I could just do whatever the hell I wanted every day, well, that would be great. We'd all love that, but --

MHA: I know that, or I think that a lot of times the scallop boats sort of are almost seasonal now? They're kind of clustered?

KH: Kind of. Kind of. But some of the guys have two. They'll do two boats and stuff, so they'll stretch it out.

MHA: I see.

KH: Some of these guys, they'll keep some trips for this time of year so when the price goes up when no one else is bringing them, they can get out and get them. So, it kind of keeps it busy through the year somewhat. Not knowing there, once March, April, May, June, and July, that's when they're busiest because they're all going, which I'd rather be busy when it's warm anyways. It's much nicer.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: But they do have trips and they do save stuff in the winter, like a couple years ago, we had that really bad winter and everything froze, well, it was pretty slow from February and half of March. They didn't even want to move then. But if it's like this and they got trips, they'll go. They'll go. Especially when there's-- See that's the thing about those scallops. With that quota and there's only one Atlantic sea scallop, that's what's got the price, that's why the prices, because these guys know only so many is going to come in and that's it. It's going to be, it's a rough estimate but they know, so that's how they ended up with, because you would have never thought they'd be getting 15, 18 dollars a pound for the scallops. Even though that is actually, for the work and the expense, it's about right.

MHA: Right.

KH: It's about right if you figure what fuel costs and everything else, it's about right, you know?

MHA: Also the amount of meat you get for --

KH: Yeah, well scallops, they're the best product these guys take because you can just grab them and they come. You can just freeze them up. When they thaw, they're perfect. You know? Fish doesn't always work out that way and stuff. And, like I said, there's only so many Atlantic sea scallops. There's other scallops from around in different places, but there's only so many of those. It's not like there's the fish. They can get cod fish from Canada, from Alaska, or whatever they get the frozen, you know? And they just mix it in and away they go. I think that's part of the reason the fish guys don't get so much.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: They don't get much money for their fish. It seems like they should be getting quite a bit more. You know?

MHA: You mentioned regulations have affected the business. How about technology? Has that affected anything that you're --

KH: Me?

MHA: Yeah.

KH: It hasn't affected me really, but let's face it. You know technology has made it so that they can catch more. No doubt about it. Go back to the days of a paper plotter and a radar. You had to look in like this and you want to know what else has killed the price of fish and everything else? The cellphone.

MHA: How so?

KH: Before, before when it was only a radio. They didn't know what guys had onboard and they didn't know when they were coming in. Now they're all on the phone all the time, so they know, OK, So and So's coming in today, but So and So's coming in tomorrow.

[30:16] KH: [continued] He's going to have fish, too, so I don't have to pay this guy too much, because there's going to be more tomorrow. You know what I'm saying?

MHA: Yeah.

KH: Little things like that people don't realize.

MHA: Interesting. Yeah.

KH: Okay? Now, when you don't know who's coming, we need some fish, we better pay for these because we need some because you don't know what or you don't know how much the other guy's got or whatever. You know? So, technology. Come on, now, they got computers and sounders and you go, everybody says to me, would you go? I says would I go, I says first off, I'd have to go over and spend two days just figuring out how to work all the stuff. You go in there now, there's a dozen computer screens on, and they've got every which way, and they put you on the 3D bottom plots. We never had nothing like that. We had a piece of paper. We'd draw lines on a piece of paper and did it like that with the Loran numbers and stuff.

MHA: Did you have a logbook that you-- When I first went out on the boats out of Provincetown, a lot of people had logbooks that they kept secret from everybody except their mate or their kid.

KH: I never did because we were working too much, but I'll tell you what. I should have wrote everything down because I could have had a good book just on excuses and things that happened with guys, you know? Things that people, just all the things. I could have wrote crew member

stories, I guarantee I could, that would have sold and made a pile of money. I should have wrote everything down, but let me tell you, you're doing all this work, the last thing you want do is be writing a story about what's happening out there. Some guys, one of the older guys, hey, some guys wouldn't even let you bring a suitcase on a boat. Superstition.

WOMAN: Oh, superstitions.

KH: No suitcase. Don't say pig. Don't whistle. It's all kinds of superstitions. Didn't know that, huh?

WOMAN: No. Like why the suitcase?

KH: Beats me. Just one of those things. You don't bring a suitcase on a boat. You bring a sea bag. You don't say pig.

WOMAN: Don't say pig.

KH: Don't whistle.

WOMAN: Interesting.

KH: Don't leave a hatch cover upside down.

MHA: What was interesting to me when I first started learning about those things is that they're common in many different cultures. It's not just the Portuguese, it's not just the --

KH: Let me ask you something. How do you think? They didn't have weathermen or anything like that. It was snow-like meals/snow a great deal. When the wind's from the east/you catch the least. All these. It's all true. It's all true. That's how they did it. My great-grandmother, you know, I say all the time and I wish I'd have paid more attention to all the things that she was saying. They didn't have any of, they looked at the sky and the moons and rings around [mimics] oh, it's going to snow tomorrow and things like that. They got all these sayings and that's where they come from, you know? Superstition. You leave the hatch cover upside down, bad things happen. It's bad luck. Bring a suitcase? Bad luck. Bob Thornwell threw a suitcase right over the side. Ain't bringing that suitcase on the boat. Phew! Right over the side. That was a long time ago, but I've seen a lot. All the hard old-timers, they're all gone now, but there's still a few out here and there.

MHA: Is your family from New Bedford or Fairhaven?

KH: Westport. Yeah, Westport. I live in Dartmouth, actually, now, but yeah, we're from Westport. I started fishing at Westport Point. Then, when we got our own boat we came and fished out of, tied right up over there at, it used to be Kelly's; now it's Fairhaven Shipyard.

WOMAN: I have a question. So, you fill the boats with water, right?

KH: Yeah.

WOMAN: Where do you get the water?

KH: The ice house.

WOMAN: And is it free or do you have to pay for it?

KH: Oh, I have to, is anything free, my dear? [laughs] I have to pay for it. There's nothing free.

WOMAN: So, is it like a pump? Like a gas pump? Or they do it like a --

KH: No. He just charges me so much a load. He's a real good guy and I help him out here and there. It's the honor system. I go in and I just keep track of how many loads I take. At the end of the month, I just write him a check for it.

WOMAN: Okay.

KH: Because it helps him, too, because now his truck gets to work more and it kind of breaks up more and he doesn't have everybody coming to the ice plant and backing up. But his business, too, is like, it's amazing how much I've watched that. It's amazing like since 1983 how few boats are here. And then when I started this in '02 or '03 of whatever, wherever it was, a couple years ago I went through the computer and took out the boats that are gone since I started, and I bet you I took 50 boats out. It's amazing. I can't even remember them all now, there's so many boats that have disappeared just in the last 12 years.

[35:06] MHA: Huh.

KH: They just, there's a few old guys like I said, that own their draggers, they're trying to hang on and once they're gone. And the other thing is I don't know who's going to run these boats. There's no young guys coming along that got the ambition to work that hard and to, you know? It's not too many of them. I don't see it.

MHA: How about the, you were saying a lot of the crew is Mexican now. Are they moving into positions like mate, engineer, that kind of thing? Would they be likely to run a boat?

KH: Some of them. There's one guy, Pasqual, he's a Mexican guy. He runs a couple of Lars' boats. I guess they're a little bit, but most of them, usually there's the first mate's, you know, an American, but there are some around here that are Mexican, because you got to have the guy speak the language to all the others to keep everything going. But there are. Hey, I got nothing against, they're good workers. And the captains will tell you, say what do you want me to do? You want me to take this, we'll call him a white guy. We'll take this regular white guy over here's going to do nothing but piss and moan and complain the whole time. He doesn't make enough money. He has to work too hard and everything else. Or am I going to take this Mexican over here who's going to get on a boat and ain't going to say a word, but do everything I tell him and work his ass off the whole time? That's what happens. We've become lazy. Let's face it.

And a lot of the guys that are left are, let's face it, that deckhands are, a lot of it, captains are one step above a police as far as having to deal with the dregs of society. But hey, I was a pirate myself [laughs] with all, but I'm telling you. You get your druggies, you get your drunks. Some of the best workers I ever had were drunks. A long as you got them, once you got them away from the bar and you just let them sleep all the way out, and once they woke up they worked like working fools so they could get back and get drunk again. But, you knew you had to deal with a lot of that. Now those guys are older and then, you know, pills are involved and stuff now. Some of them drug test. Danny Erlichson's boats, I think he drug tests over there. I think Roy even drug tests, too. So, some of them drug test to try and keep it down. Hey, the pay's good enough now that some of them, yeah, they got good crews with good guys, the few that are left, but it's, they even, they do have an advantage because they're making money. If you're making money that gives you a little power.

MHA: Right.

KH: But if you're only making an average living, you don't have any power and you can't go unless you got somebody to go with you. That's what killed me, what I hated, was the fact that I couldn't go out there and make a living without three crew members to go with me. If I didn't have them, I couldn't do anything. So, I can go deliver water all by myself.

MHA: Yeah. Did you ever consider doing inshore lobstering where you could have --

KH: I did it for a little bit. I actually have, my uncle sold me his, he sold me his inshore boat but let me tell you, I thought that was more work than offshore lobstering. It's hard to get out of bed and then drive down to go out to the boat. But at least when I'm out there on the boat, I'm out there, so boom, I jump right out of bed and let's get to work. I found it, oh, man, drive down and steam out there to haul these, I mean, it wasn't really for me.

MHA: Uh-huh.

KH: So, I kind of got rid of that and went back offshore till I finally got rid of the offshore boat. Now I got the simple water job. Tie up over there.

MHA: How about I was just going to ask you a general question about the waterfront. Do you run into many women in any kind of the positions of --

KH: There's a couple of female deckhands. There's like two. There's one that works up, she's actually been around for a while. She was a scalloper and she's up on the Marou and she gets a job the same thing. The guy says, hey, she doesn't complain. She works right there and she's a good worker. That's why she's here. You got to remember, it's a hard place to put a woman. Okay? A bunch of grubby fishermen. Okay? You know, you got to be a pretty special woman to be able to go out and take that. And I got to tell you, back in my day, my wife would have never let me take a woman out there. I have to wonder how many others' wives say the simple shit, "You ain't taking women out there," you know? But there's one that runs a captain. She's the captain of the Legacy. And there used to be another female captain around years ago. I don't

know what ever happened to either, because they sold their boat, so there is one that runs the Legacy. And like I said, there's only a couple.

MHA: How about the shore-side businesses? Do you run into them there?

[40:02] KH: Well, it's the bag lady that does the bags. It's all women that do all the settlements, you know? And all the secretary, so yeah, there's women that are getting the trickle down, there's no doubt about it. You just don't see them out here. The grub girls that bring the grub around. There's the cleaning lady that cleans a bunch of these boats. Her and her daughter and her grand, you know? So, yeah, there are women out there doing the work, they just aren't necessarily on deck.

MHA: Right.

KH: Everybody gets it. I don't even think they fathom how much money that comes off these boats, how much it grows, okay? I mean, I can take a little money off of them to get a water fill and I make it grow. They give me that little bit, a little tiny bit, tiny, tiny bit, but yet I go and I'll end up buying some fuel, this and that, and then I go home and buy groceries or whatever. Well, think, all that trickles down to all the families around here and you take these boats out of here, that's what I mean. When they take down Carlos, that'll be the beginning of the end, you know? As much as he shouldn't have been stealing.

MHA: Yeah, that's a hard one.

KH: Well, I blame the authorities as much as him because they could have stopped it any time they wanted. Stop lying to me.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: Okay? You've got Boatrax. You've got, everywhere I look there's a green cop with a truck, so don't tell me you don't have enough guys. All you need to do is make rules. Boats take out between six and six. Six a.m. to 6 p.m. That's it. Any time a boat takes out, three guys down there. Three green cops. One on the boat, two on the dock. When you're all done taking out, they check the hold, no more fish left there, everybody takes their paper. It should all be the same. What came off the boat, what went on the scale, and what's going out the door. Each guy has his own paper. Everything being the same. Should have been done with it, right then and there. You want to know what happens? Sure, you get down there and next thing you know the green cop's taking a wad full of cash, so to turn his head the other way and everything else. I've heard plenty of stories.

MHA: Really?

KH: Okay? Now, like I said, they're only stories.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: I have no idea, but I feel if they really wanted to nip it in the bud, they could have stopped it. What the whole reasoning is, I don't know. I'm sure the others would, but if you'd have made it, this is when you take out and you can't take out till everybody gets there and we all sign in, the green cop, the captain, the fish buyer, and everything else, and they keep track of everything that comes off the boat, how can you cheat? You can't cheat. But if you're just going to let them go, of course they're going to cheat. They're all going to cheat. When a man has nothing to lose, he loses it. When the system fails him, makes his own system. And that's the way it is. These guys ain't making much money. They still got bills to pay and everything else, so all of sudden you're telling them to kick all the cod over the side and kick everything else over the side and they can't, you know? It's not hard to persuade them to turn their back or whatever. Like I said, I don't know how the whole circumstances worked out and everything, but apparently, there was some manipulating of the fish from what I understand, you know? Like I said, I have no, the only thing the water guy gets is rumors. That's it. Whatever the rumors are, unless I hear right from the guy's mouth, I don't, you know, but then I don't really pass too much along. I'm pretty much by myself all the time. I'm up on the bow. Mostly I talk to the fuel guys here and there. That's about it. So, we'll see what happens, but they could probably regulate a little better. But some of these guys, they've worked real hard at making their net so they only catch haddock and they'll only go to certain areas and they won't fish in places, you know? Some guys work really hard at trying to make it work. I do know that.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: It's a phenomenal amount of money just to go try and do this stuff. It's gone up, I mean, fuel's down now, but the price of everything is just so high.

MHA: What do you think were the best years for the industry?

KH: For the fishing industry? Oh, when they first started were the best years, back when they had wood boats with glass windows and eastern rigs and they set the nets over the side. When they had schooners with a little door. Those were the best years. But, like it's the way man is. Man went after the buffalo. How many buffalo are left?

[45:02] KH: [continued] None. Went after the grizzly bears. Just about wiped them out. So, when he went after the fish, all's he do is trying a way to catch more, more, more and get better and better and better. It's just human nature; it's just the way it is, but come on, when I started lobstering, I could catch eight bushel on a 40-pot draw and I was talking to guys who'd been out there, they probably started offshore in the '70s or some time, so they'd probably been out eight or 10 years more than me, and when they started it was 15 bushel. So, in 10 years it was already down to eight bushel. When I left there 20 years later, we were lucky if you could get two bushel.

MHA: Really?

KH: Okay? And there's places where those lobster pots have been on the bottom every single day, since the '80s. Never left. Never ever, ever left. Since the '80s. That's almost half a century. I mean, it's a no brainer.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: It's a no brainer. We pounded them and pounded them and pounded them, and the only way to fix it now is you got to yank all them traps out of the water, put all them guys out of business for years, and let 'em all come back.

WOMAN: Yeah, that was my question. How do you see a solution?

KH: I don't. That is the solution is to make it, I guess the best solution would be to make it more seasonal and make them have to bring the gear home so they'd have to fish less gear as far as the lobstering goes. That was the downfall of lobstering. Like, when you had wooden traps, you could only have so many. When I started we had 800 traps. That's what we fished with. When I left, I was fishing 2400.

MHA: Oh, really?

KH: Yes. Okay? Now, they are limited but they're still down to, I think their limit's like 1800. Like I said when we started, when I started on the other boats, 600 traps is all we had. We could go out there and 600 traps and get 8,000 pounds in two days and we only had to go out to the corner buoy off Nantucket, for crying out loud, and down south of the Thumb. Now those places, like I said, they're just been traps there for so long, so you'd have to do something like Canada.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: Where Canada makes them bring all the traps out of the water. But we have so many licenses compared to Canada. It would be detrimental to the, think of Maine. What are you going to do? Tell every family in Maine you can't lobster? Because Maine there's a lot of lobsters up there. They do actually do okay up there.

MHA: But they've limited their number of traps that they can carry.

KH: Yeah. They had a limited number of traps, but I don't care. Doesn't matter. Drive along the coast of Maine, you can walk on the traps. Okay? Yes, they have limited and they've limited them out here. I think it's 800 now to the inshore and stuff, but like I said, there's still so many and they're there 24/7.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: All year long.

MHA: That's actually a question. Do they have any problem with ghost traps?

KH: Oh, I'm sure. Oh, yeah. We used to catch ghosts. You'd be surprised, the ghost traps, we'd get them back. Most of the time they were empty and stuff would stop going in them, you know, but there's ghost traps out there and that'd be a great, you want to, would that be a, go out there

and clean the bottom of the ocean? I've thought of it. Trying to get a grant to go do that. But I don't want to go live out there and clean the ocean either.

WOMAN: What do you see as the reason for the decline? Is it more the regulations or more about the fish, that there just aren't the fish there? And lobsters or whatever?

KH: Well, the lobster, I think, you know, the regulations, I don't think have make much of the decline. The lobster, like I said, some of them do well. It depends on your area. They actually, with the gauge, the reason there's lobsters left is because of the gauge size and they throw the eggers back, and now the v-notchers, so it's been a lot. The pressure, they're catching them as fast. I don't think they're depleting them anymore. I think they've got it in there, but I don't think they're getting a chance to gain on themselves, you know what I'm saying? They're grabbing them as fast as –

WOMAN: As they're breeding?

KH: As they make the size in certain spots. Now they've started, the big ones, that there's a maximum size now offshore that they have to throw back, so these things will help. I was talking to one guy and he was saying he'd throw thousands of pounds back of the big ones.

WOMAN: How do people, are they okay with that? All these guys that you talk about, when they talk about these regulations or are they okay with that?

KH: Yeah, more or, I mean, don't get me wrong. It disgusts anybody when you're throwing thousands of dollars back over the side, but I think –

WOMAN: They kind of understand?

KH: Oh, yeah, no, no. They understand. They know. Most of them have been there and watched it. They understand. They may groan a little, but they do it. The ones that are the hardest is the fish. Because what do you do?

[50:03] KH: [continued] When those fish come up in the net, the chances are you kick them back over, they're not going to live.

WOMAN: They're not going to live, yeah.

KH: You know, a lobster, the lobsters don't get the bends on the way up so we can just "boom" you just throw them back over, no big deal. The fish, I don't know what the answer is to the fish because even if you told these guys, all right, if you catch a little by-catch, we'll let you bring it in. Well, you know what? They're not [mimics], oh, next thing you know, a thousand pounds of cod turns into 10,000 pounds of cod by-catch. You know? So, it's real tough.

MHA: Yes. In some places, though, they allow you to bring in the by-catch and in fact you have to bring in the by-catch, but they don't let you sell it. You have to donate it to one of the food services or whatever.

KH: Yeah.

MHA: That, at least, doesn't make people want to go catch them. If they happen to catch them, they can at least bring them in.

KH: Yeah.

MHA: But they haven't allowed that here. I had some discussions once with one of the regional directors to say why don't you try this? And they said no, they'd still target them.

KH: Yeah. I don't know. Like I said, a lot of these guys, well, the older, some of the older stubborn Portuguese guys, they're still set in their ways. It's hard. But like somebody said, some of the other guys, they've modified and they've spent, it's been intense. They got pictures drawn of these nets and everything and they're custom-made so they can, the fish they don't want gets out. So, some are really willing to work at it, but then they get nailed with other things like okay, you got this, you're giving them a quota, but then you're telling them all you can't go in this area and get them, you can't go in that area and get them. Well, if you just get them, gave them the quota and said go get them, they'd go out there and they might have that quota caught up in two months. And then you know what happens? They bring the boat home and the net doesn't go in the water and drag around anymore at all. But instead, you've got these closed areas so they're just towing around them in a circle over and over, going around the areas, getting the fish as they come out to try and get their catch so they can make a trip to eventually get their quota. So, I have to wonder should you just let them go and this is your quota. When you get it, you're done. They do the same thing with the gill nets. Those gill net guys, they give them a quota but then they only allow them so many pounds a day. Now, they're running back and forth and if they go over a day then they have to sit out there and float around and then they come in. Well, this whole time the nets are out there in the water, the nets that are supposedly harmful. Well, if you said okay, your quota's 25,000 pounds, if you can go out and get all 25,000 pounds in a week and then you bring it home and take your nets out of the water, doesn't that make more sense than to make that guy spend, say, 25 days getting a thousand pounds a day? You know? And the other thing is the government thing, is they take so long to react, to change anything. By then it's too late. The damage is already done. You see it with the closed areas for the scallops. They just let them fish and fish till there's nothing there. And they say oh, we'll close that one down now. Well, you should have closed it, you should have been paying more attention, which they do because they get all the info. These guys have to, they have to fax in what they catch and everything else, so it's not like they don't know. When you see a boat, when they first started some of them closed areas, they can go down in a week, get their limit. Well, when all of a sudden you see it's taking them all of two weeks to get their limit, well, it's time to think about closing that area because something's, we're catching them up, there. We need to let them grow a little more. Hey, I've been to the meetings.

MHA: That's what I was going to ask. [laughs]

KH: Well, I went. When I was lobstering, oh, it must have been some time in the '90s there they got onto the save the whales. So, it was all about save the whales. So, I went on that. Somehow

they bamboozled me and said will you go? I said all right, I'll volunteer and go. So, I went up and spent three days up near Boston with these people. Finally, I had to stand up and say look, I got to go. I said we spent three days here and you haven't done anything. Absolutely nothing but talk and worry about where we're having lunch. Okay? So that shows you how government works. It's just incredible. I couldn't take it anymore.

WOMAN: Wouldn't it have been better to like form a sort of committee of just fishermen?

KH: They do have committees of fishermen and stuff, but too --

WOMAN: And kind of monitoring like [overlapping voices] what you're taking about?

KH: It's tough kind of letting the fox be in charge of the hen house, though, you know what I mean?

WOMAN: Yeah.

KH: It's like those herring boats. All them guys sit on the council and everything, so that's kind of tough.

WOMAN: But, like if they realize that there's this issue with the overfishing then, you know, they realize that it's their livelihood, they'd be maybe more --

KH: You would think.

WOMAN: Wow.

KH: You would think.

WOMAN: No? It doesn't work, huh?

[55:13] KH: You would think.

WOMAN: Yeah.

KH: You would think. But, no, you're right. They should be the fishermen and the regulators should work far more together.

WOMAN: Right.

KH: And, but like I say, it's similar.

WOMAN: I mean, if there were like, I don't know, even like people who were sort of like deputy, part of the fishermen community, but sort of deputies at the same time, saying sort of as a liaison, I don't know, it's just an idea. A possibility.

KH: It's a tough --

WOMAN: Yeah.

KH: It's tough. You don't even know what's out there in the ocean. I've been out there a long time and you can look over the side all you want, you can't see what's down there. They can say there's this, say there's that, and they really don't know. You can't know. You can't know. Depends on, fish move. The habitats change.

WOMAN: Yeah.

KH: There's a lot to it, because those guys can go out and find fish if they want to find any kind of fish they want, they can go get them. They know where they are. I know guys that take the researchers out there. I understand they want to make the tows in the same spots so it's controlled tow, but when a guy with all the experience is telling you, look, there's no fish here. There's never going to be any fish here; there never has been any fish here. We need to go over there is where the fish are. Well, then you need to tow in both spots, not just ignore the guy who knows what's going on so you can keep towing and saying there's no fish, there's no fish.

WOMAN: Right.

KH: You know, little things like that.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: Because I've talked-- I know guys that have taken them out there and if I've talked to them, I kind of have to laugh.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: I should have jumped over and saved the whales. I'm telling you that's a huge mistake. I should have got out of the fishing business right then, switched right over, jumped right over and said yup, we got to save all these whales. You can never save enough of them. It's an endless funded thing that guarantees those people that were sitting in that room are getting big fat six-figure paychecks and are going to have pensions and everything else for wandering around protecting the whales.

MHA: And they don't have to be out at sea all day. [laughs]

KH: They don't have to be out at sea. Like I said, they're more concerned about where we're going to have lunch. It's incredible. And they're still going.

MHA: So, Kevin, if you had, there's part of this work will be for the Fishing Center and we're hoping to develop a new exhibit. Have you been there yet by the way?

KH: The Fishing Center? No.

MHA: You have to go. It's really cool. [laughs]

KH: I don't know. It's a fishing center. Where's that at?

MHA: It's on Bethel Street. It's 38 Bethel, I think, which is actually the same street as the whaling museum, but finally there's a museum that has to do with fishing, not whaling. We're still fishing. We're not still whaling.

KH: Yup.

MHA: As you pointed out. [laughs] Anyway, we have one exhibit now and we're trying to develop new exhibits so it won't get boring. If you had a thought about what the center should show about your business, about the fishing business in general, what would you like to emphasize?

KH: Beats me. I don't have much of an answer for that, I guess. Hey, show that it really supports a lot of families around here.

MHA: I think that's really important.

KH: You know? They just don't realize. Like I said, the people making the rules don't care. They've come to the point now where they're making rules for the rules. Okay? They've got nothing to do, so they're making rules for the rules. It's got to stop at some point.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: Okay? We understand keep things clean and don't pollute. We get it. You know? Yeah, we got to try and conserve. These guys get it now. You know? Like I said, stop making rules for the rules, and the fishing industry really, it's still family. It's still guys supporting their family, just regular working stiffs supporting their families. That's the way it is.

MHA: I think that's really important. I liked when you were listing out some of the businesses that you don't really think about like cleaning the boat.

KH: Right.

WOMAN: Yeah, I didn't even know they had people out there. I thought the people --

KH: Sure. She does well. She cleans a lot of damn boats. They're going all the time. Her, her daughter, I think her son helps her. Like I said, it's a lady who makes all those scallop bags.

MHA: Right.

KH: They sew up all the scallop bags. And of course there's welders that work on the, fix the drags and stuff like that.

[1:00:07] KH: [continued] Then the gear guy. It goes way further than that. Somebody's got to sell these guys the shackles, the nets, and everything else. Well, those shackles and nets don't just fall out of the shackle tree up at Reidar's. They get delivered by a truck from somewhere else. I mean, I'm sure a lot of them, most of them come from China, but they still have to come in on a boat and somebody had to pick them up, put them in a truck, the truck had to bring them in. That person got paid and he bought some stuff and that trickled down. It's huge.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: The world does not work without customers.

MHA: Right.

KH: And the sooner they realize, they talk about oh, we got this, we got that. No, you got to have customers. If you keep taking all the money from the people and they don't have any money to spend, guess what? They're not customers anymore. Then when you have no customers, everybody suffers. So, that's the bottom line. This industry makes a lot of customers.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: A real lot of customers. Like I said, I watched them, When I first started this, these scallopers just started making money. They had been starving through the '90s. In the '90s, you couldn't, no one wanted a scalloper. They were giving them away. I should have bought a half a dozen. Idiot. You know? I could have, actually, when I sold my boat I could have bought a license for short money, but I didn't want to go fishing anymore. I had no idea that it was just going to go on for over a decade that they were going to keep making money. But the point being, is when they started making money, I'd just started this and I watched these guys. These boats at that time were all rusty messes and old electronics and everything else, and boom, after the first year, I think they all made money the first two years were still in shock, but then after that, they let loose. There were guys putting new electronics on everything, every boat was getting painted, all the well, everything was getting fixed everywhere, so it was trickling down at a huge rate. Huge rate. You know, it slowed up now, because everybody's fixed, for one thing, so they only have certain things to do and now they got less time at sea and all that, but there's no doubt that it, that trickled down. It does work. If they ain't making money, nobody makes any money. The bottom line. Shipyard. Look at the shipyard. All the boats. All those workers there. It's all from taking care of most of these boats here. Yeah, they got other boats that come in, but think of how that trickles out like out of this city. I don't know how much it is, but a million dollars in that, one of them scallopers stocks a million dollars. It's going to turn it into five, I bet you, by the time it goes up to dock and gets all spread around and everything else. So it's hugely important here. Without the fishing fleet, New Bedford's done. It's already one of the worst cities in the state anyways with unemployment and everything else.

WOMAN: What is the unemployment? Do you know?

KH: I don't know. I want to say maybe at least six or something like that. It doesn't matter. They lie to you about the unemployment rate. You can't believe. When they tell you the unemployment is four percent, that's the biggest lie to come down the pike. I bet you the unemployment rate truly around here is 20 to 25 percent everywhere. Think about all the people that don't work, can't work, can't find jobs, given up on work. If you take the true, man, that's nationwide. Ninety million people out of work. Sixty million people on food stamps. You can't believe a thing they say to us. If you are you're naïve. You believe, oh yeah, the economy's getting better. For who? Getting better if you live in Washington, DC. Good for them, yeah, but for the rest of us, don't think so.

MHA: I think it's the real estate people that are doing well. [laughs] Because the rents keep going up.

KH: Yeah. That ain't no trip to Reno, though. I know some guys that got them rental things and [sighs], that's almost like torture.

MHA: Really? [laughs]

KH: Well, yeah, because all of a sudden you get a bad tenant. It's a nightmare to get rid of them, sure. The realtors, the real estate guys that are doing good are the ones that own them great big buildings down in the city and everything else. Now, they're doing great, but yeah, you can do okay but renting out to people really becomes a nightmare pretty much. A lot of guys I know that rent out, they actually keep a few thousand dollars so they can just buy the people out when they want to get rid of them instead of trying to go through the eviction process, because that could be six months. They'll just go down to the person they want out and say look, here's three grand. I'll give you the three grand. Get your shit and get out. I'll give you a good reference at the next place.

[1:05:01] KH: [continued] Of course, they grab the money and away they go. No, I don't think the economy is too good. Like I said, these scallop guys are lucky. They only catch enough scallops to take care of the rich people. Because if they had to depend on selling them to everybody else at that price, it wouldn't work. A lot of them go to China, I guess. A lot of the lobsters, too. So, we'll see.

MHA: Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you think I should have? [laughs]

KH: No. I pretty much just said I'd do this because a guy asked me. It's just the water boat. That's all it is.

MHA: Actually, Phil will be coming around at some point to take a picture.

KH: Have you talked to the fuel guys?

MHA: I talked to, I've forgotten the name now, at Bay Fuels.

KH: Al?

MHA: I haven't talked to the people that actually do the work. I've talked to the office.

KH: Yeah, yeah.

MHA: So, I do need to talk to more people who actually do the hands-on work.

KH: Yup. They're fairly busy too.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: Most of the time. Like I said, like everything, we've just seen it diminish and then you have to wonder, well, what's it going to be in 10 years? Is it going to be diminished right down to half a dozen boats? That's the scary thing.

MHA: Right. Well, that's what a lot of the ground fish captains or owners were saying. They're just going to put everybody out of business so they only have to deal with one or two people at any meeting. [laughs]

KH: No, really, that's the plan. Well, the plan is they don't want any nets or anything dragging the bottom of the ocean. That's really the plan and when you got people, like I was reading about one lady there, I don't know. I forget which one she donated to, and it wasn't Peter but it was one of them, you know, and she donated 200 million dollars in one, just one donation and I'm saying well, how do you fight that? These guys can't fight that.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: Two-hundred million dollars just in one donation just to keep hammering them, so eventually they're going to lose. Like I said, you watch. Once those marine monuments get, they got through with those because now remember, they did it out in the Pacific there's huge place out there that they can't go. Huge. And they do that here and take away the Banks from these guys, it's all over. And I have to wonder, what are you going to do with all these people out of work? They keep doing it everywhere. What do they think? They're going to hand everybody a few food stamps and it's going to be all right? I don't see it. I don't see it. You know? We'll see. Maybe Trump's going to make America great again. [laughs] Maybe. Maybe not. [Everyone laughs] You know?

MHA: Who knows?

KH: No, I don't think anything's going to happen to change for us. I'll tell you what's going to happen. You're going to pay more and get less, just like always. They're all on the same team. It's a big special club and we ain't in it. It's the truth. You want to take them in any way? They tell us how much of our money they're going to take, they tell us what they're going to spend it on, and we have no choice. My daughter made 99,000 dollars this year. They took 35,000 dollars from her, okay? That's crazy. Why? So, what? We can subsidize my dentist with solar panels? The insanity never stops. Okay? We're going to give solar panels to all the rich people so they

don't have to pay an electric bill and we're going to take the tax dollars from the working kids to pay for it. How can you even justify doing something like that? All right. You want to have solar panels and you want government money to pay for it, fine. You put up solar fields and you let every citizen that pays an electric bill benefit from it, not have my dentist says as he's picking my teeth telling me how he got his solar panels and now he's not paying this for electricity and he got government kickbacks to the tune of 35,000 dollars.

MHA: There's your daughter's taxes. [laughs]

KH: There's her taxes. That's the point I'm making. How can you people do this? It makes no sense. Then, on top of that, where's the incentive for the solar company to lower the price if they're going get an automatic check from the government no matter what they say it costs? There is no incentive. They'll never, ever be competitive and lower the price until there's no free money for it. Until the regular person has to go out and actually buy it, then they'll find a way to lower the price. Until then? It's insanity. Insanity.

[1:10:06] KH: [continued] Plenty of my buddies' friends got them and I give them shit all the time, you're stealing. You're stealing. I says you're telling me you couldn't afford your electric bill? [mimics] Well, I just wanted to save, I says yeah. So you're going to save a hundred bucks a month on your electric bill, but yet you're going to fleece the taxpayers for 25 grand? It doesn't make any sense. You weren't going to use 25 grand in electricity for the rest of your life. You know? It kills me. Kills me. No common sense left anywhere anymore. You want to go investigate something? How about the dock down there? What was that? A150 million dollars and what are we doing? We're loading scrap steel. All right? And the way I understand it, New Bedford makes 180-some thousand dollar a month bond payment. You're telling me they're making that off of scrap steel down there?

MHA: Didn't they do that for the wind farm?

KH: Yeah, the wind farm where they knew that the barges wouldn't fit through the dike, but they did it anyways? But no one investigates that and puts it on the news. All right? Who made the decision? Who knew the staging barges would not fit through the dike but we made the dock anyways? Okay? Just like the railroad bridge. You see the new railroad bridge they put up, right? Well, five years ago they sandblasted and cleaned the old one to the tune of millions of dollars. Well, who knew they were going to clean and do all that and then we were going to put one up three years later? These people need to be held accountable that make these retarded decisions. They waste, so now we don't have fire stations, we have fire palaces. Okay? All on the taxpayers' dime. Oh, we'll just get a bond and we'll make a payment. You know? These people have lost their freaking minds and when's it going to stop? Broke. We got kids going to school in trailers, but we got fire palaces. It just appalls me. Like I said, no one goes, that dock down there, they spent and I watched the waste. Hell, I got some of the money out of it because I filled the tugboats with water and everything, so I actually reaped some of the profits, but it's basically, I was putting it in this pocket and they're just going to rip it out of my other pocket to pay for it. So, you don't really gain too much. But like I said, there it is. They built this giant fancy dock and they're down there loading scrap steel onto a ship every few months. Well, how can that justify what they spent down there? Just doesn't make any sense. It's everywhere. I mean, hell,

it's a beautiful dock, but we got a lightship tied up down there and now we're ruining all the blacktop and everything by putting scrap steel all over it. It just bothers me when I see all that crap, you know?

MHA: Yeah.

KH: Like I said, do you like paying taxes? You like paying more? My property tax goes up every single year. I don't get anything for it, but it goes up every year. And if you don't pay the king, you got to pay the king for everything. That's the way it comes down. The king and all his men. It's too bad. You know?

MHA: I wonder what could change that? I mean, it seems like young people nowadays don't read news, they don't know what's real and what's false --

KH: They get their news from some of these comedy guys, where they shouldn't, you know? Then you can't, the news on the regular TV is 80 percent bullshit now. It comes out all the time so you have to go on the computer and try and find, there's places. I go to them all. I'm always reading this stuff. It just drives me insane to see it all, but it's massive. It's massive, it's massive stealing is what it's come down to and right, how do you fix it now? It is so massive. It's so big. The corruption starts at the school house and goes all the way to the White House. Every municipality, the whole country. We're not the only place putting up fire. They're going up everywhere. Any place they can get the dough and do something stupid, they're doing it. Look, our representatives up here in Massachusetts, how many days did they spend in the last week talking about we're not going to do daylight savings time? We're going to be different than all the states around us, so we'll be an hour off from Rhode Island, Connecticut, and everything. And we're paying them to do this. That's a part-time job at best and we're paying these people to go up there, like I said, they're making rules for the rules. They're worried about something that's worked fine and it's going along and I bet you ask half them people they don't even know why they did the daylight savings time. Do you know why?

[1:15:13] MHA: Farmers, right?

KH: Victory gardens. World War II.

MHA: Victory gardens?

KH: So they had time when they came home after work to work in their victory gardens.

WOMAN: That's what I heard.

KH: Nobody knows. I tell people. I say, that's-- Because I didn't know. I had to find out. Why the hell do we do this anyways? And that's why. But, there they are. They're up there wasting time and money coming up with daylight savings. You're telling me there's nothing better to do there? Isn't there something you can come up with for work, so that's what we're up against. The people that have these jobs are, well, I guess they have these jobs because they couldn't get other jobs is basically what it comes down to, to put it nicely. And it's so easy to spend somebody

else's money. They just don't care and they don't think about it, but in the long run it's going to hurt us all, we're all going to bleed from it. I'm afraid it's going to be bad when the time finally comes. Wait'll the derivatives bubble bursts or something like that and the next big crash. They're all [mimics] All your Elizabeth Warrens and the Dodd-Frank and everything, they've never read it. I've read bunches of it. That Dodd-Frank has got it set up there so they can do a bailing. You know what a bailing is? Same thing they did in Cyprus. They close the bank and take your money to bail themselves out. How do you think that's going to work out? Not too good, but you also got to remember, 50 percent of the people in this country couldn't scrape up 400 dollars if they had to, so what's going to happen if they close the banks and take your money? Well, 50 percent of the people ain't going to give a shit, are they? Nope, they're not going to care, okay? So, you're not going to get them to fight with you to be on your side, because they're not going to care. They're going to take our money. I think before they do that, I bet you 10 years or so they take the 401(k)s, that's what they're, they're salivating over them and here's how they're going to do it. I was watching Ron Paul. They're going to make a law and force all those 401(k)s, 403(b)s, and everything, they'll make a law that says say 20 percent of them has to be invested in government bonds. Okay? You understand? So, if there's 35 trillion dollars in retirement funds out there and they say 25 percent has to go into government bonds, so there's seven trillion dollars right off the bat, whether them bonds are junk worthless or you get no return, whatever, it doesn't matter, that's what they're going to do. I think it'll be a while before they get to that because we're still kicking the can and stuff down the road, but if you watch Ron Paul and the Liberty Report, you'd be, it's like man, you want to shoot yourself in the head because he says it right out. He said I worked there for 35 years, I know how these people think. They're had that Maxine Waters and them, they've had committee meetings and everything on getting those 401(k)s. They want them. They're salivating over that money.

MHA: That's a little terrifying.

KH: People should be terrified. They should be terrified. They've been stealing off us forever. Why do people think they're not going to keep doing it? They won't come up with ways of taking more? You know they're going to. That's all they think about is how to get more money, how to get more money. We're 20 trillion in the hole. Just in the spending they got projected for the next 10 years is going to put us 15 trillion more. That's already written in. So, when do they plan on stopping? Never. So, they're going to have to get the money somewhere at some point, and I do, afraid they're going to be coming looking to us for it. Don't worry, though. The real rich people will get their taken out of the banks and they'll have a heads-up, so they'll get theirs out in time.

MHA: Right.

KH: So, they'll be all set. We won't have to worry about them.

MHA: We don't have to worry about them, okay. Well, that's good. [laughs]

KH: [laughs] They'll get theirs out in time. That's what happened in Cyprus. They left the bank open in England so all the rich guys could get their money out of that branch in England. Hey, and when you watch, I watched them interviewing people over there and you could tell right

away when they walked up to someone who lost money in the bank, they had a bad attitude. And you walked up to somebody who didn't have any money in the bank, they didn't care. They didn't care. That's, remember? The evil rich.

[1:20:04] KH: [continued] You got a house? You're the evil rich. You got to remember that. They'll make, with that rich/poor divide, it's not rich like we think of rich, you got to remember it's people that don't have anything, anybody who's got something is rich. That's the sad thing about them. Once they get primed and corrupted enough, that's the way they'll think; we're the evil rich, just because we've got a place out in Dartmouth or whatever. That's more of the divide that they're always pumping. If they keep us divided, then we, you know? It's way more of us than there are in that club, but as long as they keep us all divided and fighting one another, the club rules. Right? It's sad. It's the way it goes. Like I said, we'll see what happens. See what happens tomorrow. We're going to have riots and everything else, probably.

MHA: I don't know if there'll be riots, but I think there'll be marches and things like that. I guess it depends on the reaction because if there's a strong reaction from police or --

KH: Oh, they're not going to let them get to that inauguration. They didn't let them get to the conventions.

MHA: Right.

KH: All right? But, they let them tear apart. Where the hands up, don't shoot guy. They let them tear up apart where they want, but they didn't, and I thought for sure when they had the Republican convention then I thought for sure, man, there's going to be trouble here, but no. They had the fences up and they didn't let those people anywhere near it. They're very selective of what they let them tear up.

MHA: Right.

KH: You know? They're evil, OK? [laughs]

MHA: I'm old enough that I remember the Democrat convention when --

WOMAN: In Chicago.

KH: Yeah, yeah, yeah. You remember that? Yeah.

MHA: They probably learned from that. [laughs]

KH: Yeah.

MHA: I'm going to turn the recorder off now because I think --

KH: Yeah, I got no --

MHA: -- we're past --

KH: Like I said, it isn't much of a, just a little old water boat.

WOMAN: Is it that one right there?

KH: Yeah, the little one with the green whiskers and the tires.

MHA: Okay, I'm going to ask you to tell me a little bit more about the boat itself.

KH: The boat's 40 feet long, 12 feet wide, and it's got a tank, a separate tank in the middle. Holds about 8,000 gallons of water. As you see it right now, it's setting low. When that boat, when it's empty, that bow's up out of the water, you can almost see the bottom because it comes up so high.

MHA: How old did you say it was?

KH: It's 54 years old. It's been here since 1962. Like I said, I think there was a wooden one before that, I think I heard them tell. And I don't know if there's another water boat anywhere on the East Coast. Might be a couple of barges that go and do big ships and stuff, but as far as, well, there ain't too many other fishing ports with as many fishing boats. This is probably the last one left.

MHA: Right.

KH: You know? There's no boats in Gloucester anymore or Portland. It's all about tourists. That's what they want to do here. I've seen the pictures. They've got pictures over there in the building of the dock with yachts tied up to it and stuff. It's like oh, yeah. You know? So, that's what they'd like. I think that was the whole plan with the dock down there. The plan was they were hoping to get the casino and use that dock to bring in small cruise ships and stuff is what I think.

MHA: I bet you're right, actually.

KH: I think that was the major plan with that. They all seem to think the casinos are the be all, end all, going to save everything, but I don't really think so. I think they should have put the aquarium in there.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: Remember way back when they were going to do that?

MHA: Yes.

KH: I really, you know? It would have tied in with the whaling museum and I think they could have had something there.

MHA: I agree with you and I loved the idea that they had beautiful designs. They just couldn't raise enough money, I guess. I don't know.

KH: Please. They can raise it for, we can give two billion dollars to Pakistan. Right? Right. Six hundred million to Mexico. A few hundred million there, a few hundred million. I forget how many. We give to everybody. You know? That we couldn't come up with the money. They could have come up with it. They didn't want to come up with the money. That's the bottom line. I think that would have went really nice over there. Like I say, it would have tied in with the whaling museum and everything else.

MHA: Yes, and now with the fishing museum.

KH: Right, with the fishing museum. [overlapping voices] Yeah, right, fishing museum. The whole deal would have gone.

[1:25:08] KH: [continued] I never understand why they --

MHA: You said your boat doesn't take a whole lot of fuel to run either? It's pretty efficient?

KH: Nope. It's real efficient. Fuel sipper. Fuel sipper. It's old.

MHA: Yeah.

KH: It's old. It's old engine there. You couldn't put that engine in a boat now because it wouldn't meet Tier 3 and all that. Same with the bump motor. That's why I'll just always keep rebuilding those because the new ones are going to use more. They're all electronic and everything else, and they're just not the same. That thing there, [sighs]. I can't believe how little bit of fuel it uses. I only have to get fuel one a month.

MHA: Do you fuel on, not fuel, but water the boats here and on [overlapping voices] --

KH: Everywhere. North of bridge. New Bedford side, Fairhaven side, everywhere inside this dike. Everywhere. I go everywhere. I've done a couple outside the dike when they were doing all the dredging and the barges for the catchment and stuff when they built the dock.

WOMAN: It's not drinking water though?

KH: You could drink it.

WOMAN: You can?

KH: Yeah, it's regular city water. Don't worry. It's got plenty of fluoride and everything else in it. It's good city water.

WOMAN: What do they, the fishermen? They use it to clean the fish?

Kevin Hart interview, January 17, 2017

KH: Oh, they use it to wash, shower.

WOMAN: Oh.

KH: Some of them got washing machines, dryers, and some of them use it to cook, but a lot of them nowadays they'll get the bottled water is what they use, but yeah, my tank's perfectly clean. It comes right out of, I mean, it's crystal clear. You can't, but let's face it, a tank on a boat, a tank on an RV, it's tank water. It's tank water. It's eventually could get a little bacteria in it and whatever, but for the most part, never had any problems. What might happen once in a while on these boats is when they sit, an algae grows in there and then the algae dies and it smells like rotten eggs and then they'll call me. [mimics] Oh, you gave me bad water. Well, it's not my water. You got to put a little bleach in your tank. Some guys actually put swimming pool chlorine in there to keep it clean. But it's got all the fluoride and all the good stuff in it. Lord only knows what else. I'm pretty sure they do fluoride here in New Bedford, too. That's why I have a well. [laughs] Why, you think fluoride water's a good thing?

MHA: My kids' teeth were good [laughs] so --

KH: You should research that instead of researching me. Okay? Because you know it's hydrofluoric acid? Poison, you know? Ever read the back of your toothpaste thing and it tells you if you eat it, call the poison center? That's toothpaste. You're putting it in your mouth, but on the back it says if you eat it, call the poison center. Does that make any sense?

MHA: I guess not. [laughs]

KH: No, it doesn't make any sense, does it? That's because the fluoride is poison. I've had my dentist, I get, she says you want fluoride? I says no, I don't want no poison. She finally had to admit it's poison. It's big business. It's all it's about is the money. You know how much money they get? They buy the stuff, then they have to buy the buffer after they put the fluoride in because you have to dilute the acid you just put in the water with a buffer, plus the hazmat clothes and gloves and then the whole nine yards. It's huge. Huge money. You know what Hitler used fluoride for? To make the Jews more docile. It's been proven. Fluoride lowers IQ.

MHA: Huh.

KH: See? Nobody knows these things.

WOMAN: I heard that, yeah.

KH: Because they don't want you to know that. That's why, you've got to go look for those things. You go look and you can find there's all kinds of things on fluoride now. It's not such a good thing. That's why your inner cities are dumbed down. How long they been pumping them people for fluoride? You don't want to imagine it, I know, but it's interesting as hell, actually, when you start reading about it or watch. I've watched videos and stuff. It's like wow, you're kidding me. But it's, you know? Fluoride. What else do they do to us?

MHA: [laughs] I don't think I want to know.

[1:29:42] End of audio